

SEAL Team Two returns from capturing terrorists, protecting democracy

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From capturing terrorists and helping citizens vote in the first ever Afghanistan elections to protecting the President of the United States, a local-based SEa, Air, and Land (SEAL) returned home from a historic six-month deployment in October.

Located at Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek, Va., SEAL Team Two returned from operating in five continents and participating in seven major operations.

"Our deployment was extremely successful," said Cmdr. Tim Szymanski, commanding officer of SEAL Team Two. "We were committed to several operations worldwide and the performance of all my SEALs and Sailors was spectacular. We made significant, and historic contributions to the War On Terror and supported several other strategic objectives. I'm extremely proud of this team, these men and their families."

With platoons spread across the world, these SEALs captured and killed terrorists in Iraq and Afghanistan, protected strategic oil lines in Southern Iraq, conducted counter narcotics and special reconnaissance operations in South America, trained forces in the Philippines, East Timor and India, and provided security during the Afghan elections and the Olympics held in Greece.

"We directly supported four different geographical areas during a 9-month deployment," Szymanski said. "Even with this dispersion, my task units were successful in every endeavor."

"The success of this diverse deployment is a testament to the 'leadership' bestowed and executed by the officers and chiefs of my team. Simply put; they led in all situations."

While conducting 25 combat operations in Afghanistan, SEAL task units struck a significant blow to Taliban and al Qaeda leadership networks in several remote areas. These efforts led to the capture of four senior Taliban and al Qaeda leaders as well as the destruction of six large weapons caches.

The commando units operating in Afghanistan achieved a first for the SEAL community. In the first joint and combined special operations campaign led by Naval Special Warfare forces during Operation Enduring Freedom, senior level Taliban and al Qaeda leadership members were killed or captured.

This campaign also confirmed the presence of foreign fighters in remote areas of Afghanistan, disrupted one of the primary foreign fighter networks moving foreign fighters between Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, and recovered critical enemy intelligence.

Possibly more important than killing and capturing terrorists, SEAL task units also contributed to the security of the Afghan elections, helping safeguard the initial step toward democracy in Afghanistan.

"Our mission was to conduct direct action operations so Taliban and al Qaeda could not disrupt the Presidential election," said SEAL Lt. Chuck Hayes, commander of the SEAL task unit operating in country.

As task units and platoons helped provide security for the Afghan elections, units and platoons in Iraq helped to rid Iraq of similar forces that are threatening stability and the upcoming elections.

SEAL units, working with joint and combined Special Operations Forces, conducted dangerous offensive operations against foreign fighters, former regime elements, and anti-Iraqi forces. SEAL commandos carried out their missions at night, often taking down multiple targets simultaneously

assisting conventional forces and other SOF. These operations resulted in the capture and arrest of more than 35 known terrorists, the seizure of five large weapons caches, and the destruction of known anti-coalition forces.

SEAL units also conducted offensive operations in and around Southern Iraq to ensure the security of vital oil infrastructure nodes on the Al-Faw Peninsula. These forces acted as a bridge, protecting the oil supply network as it moved from land to sea for eventual export.

As the President of the United States traveled abroad, SEAL task units augmented the Secret Service and provided maritime security for the President and his family during visits to Europe.

Along with protecting the President and his family, SEAL task units also operated in the shadows of the Olympics in Greece. These elite units conducted over 60 missions to ensure the safety of American Olympians.

The returning SEAL team showed the incredible flexibility of SEAL teams and units. Through their flexibility and combat effectiveness, these SEALs return to Virginia knowing they have helped shape a better world for complete strangers in foreign countries, and have greatly increased the security of the United States.



A SEAL team member provides cover for conventional forces. SEAL units are working jointly with conventional forces in Iraq. (Navy photo)